

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 15, 2018

The Honorable Ken Calvert  
Chairman  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Interior, Environment, and Related  
Agencies  
2007 Rayburn House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Interior, Environment, and Related  
Agencies  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum:

As you begin work on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Appropriations Act, we write to urge you to reject the devastating proposed cuts to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) scientific research programs in the President's FY 2019 budget request. At a time when our environmental challenges are only intensifying, cutting our science budget in half constitutes a terrible danger to our people and should be set aside immediately.

Full funding for scientific research is essential to almost everything EPA does to protect the American public. For almost 50 years, EPA has been responsible for improving the quality of our air, water and land, and protecting our health and the environment in ways we have come to take for granted. Rigorous scientific research is indispensable to EPA's ability to fulfill its mission. This budget proposal is cutting off our nose to spite our face.

Many forms of science, from toxicology to engineering, are involved in EPA's standard setting as well as its reviews of new chemicals, disaster relief work and Superfund cleanups. Data, analysis and judgments guided by the best available science drive assessments about pollutants' effects on people and the environment, how pollutants travel through air or water, how they can be captured and assessed, and what kinds of technologies are effective in their control. EPA science meets the highest standards for integrity, peer review, transparency and ethics and is necessary to support agency actions that are often challenged in court.

We ask that you reject the President's reckless and baffling proposals to cut the following accounts that fund EPA's critical scientific research:

- **Research in Air and Energy** (proposed cut of 63%): This research program enables EPA to understand how humans and the environment are affected by air pollution; provides analysis and data to understand which pollutants to control and at what levels; and prepares the country to respond to climate change and air quality challenges. This

information is needed to inform public health decisions essential to community public health and well-being. The air research program is one of the EPA's biggest success stories with estimated cumulative economic, social and environmental benefits projected to reach almost \$2 trillion for the year 2020,<sup>1</sup> compared to estimated costs of roughly \$65 billion in the same time period.

- **Research on Safe and Sustainable Water Resources** (proposed cut of 36%): This research program funds EPA's development and use of science to ensure safe drinking water and protect water resources and their designated uses, including drinking water, aquatic life, recreation, and control of industrial processes. The program developed tools for assessing risks of exposure to lead in drinking water and bolstered efforts to address ongoing lead contamination and chlorine challenges in the drinking water system of the City of Flint.
- **Research on Sustainable Communities** (proposed cut of 60%): Scientists in this program conduct health, environmental engineering, and ecological research and then translate it into planning and analysis tools used by localities throughout the United States to facilitate regulatory compliance and improve environmental and health outcomes. This research also develops and demonstrates new and improved techniques for environmental protection as required by law. For example, program researchers devised a method for estimating how various sources, including drinking water, food, dust, soil, and air, contribute to blood lead levels in infants and young children.
- **Research on Chemical Safety and Sustainability** (proposed cut of 33%): This research program enables EPA to fulfill one of its core missions: evaluating the potential effects on human health and the environment of thousands of chemicals in existence and under development. EPA program offices depend on this research to develop the scientific knowledge, tools, and models needed to conduct integrated, timely, and efficient chemical evaluations. This research is essential to implementing the 2015 amendments to the Toxic Substances Control Act, which the administration must execute faithfully.
- **STAR Grants** (proposed cut of 100%): The administration wants to completely eliminate this grant program, which provides funds to outside researchers for cutting edge work in all four of the areas above. Congress rejected a similar proposal for FY 2018 and should do so in FY 2019 as well.

We urge your continued support for a strong, vibrant, and effective EPA by empowering the Agency to develop the science needed to inform its critical work protecting America's health and environment. The Agency's budget documents recognize how vital science is to EPA's work, correctly pointing out that the rule of law "must be built on the application of robust science that is conducted to help the Agency meet its mission." For that reason, EPA has adopted the objective

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<sup>1</sup> The Benefits and Costs of the Clean Air Act from 1990 to 2020, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Office of Air and Radiation, March 2011, available at <https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-07/documents/summaryreport.pdf> (accessed March 15, 2018).

to "prioritize sound science." The request of a 49% cut to EPA research makes a mockery of that objective. Congress must provide the Agency's research programs with the resources required to accomplish that objective by fully funding those vital programs.

Thank you for your consideration and attention to this request.

Sincerely,

Jamie Nash

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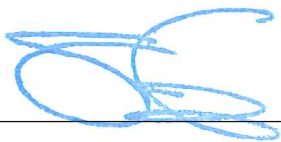
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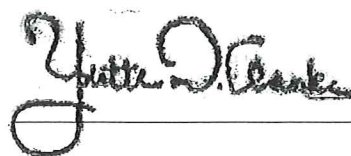
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